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"Vanity Fair,"
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&c. &c.

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1858.

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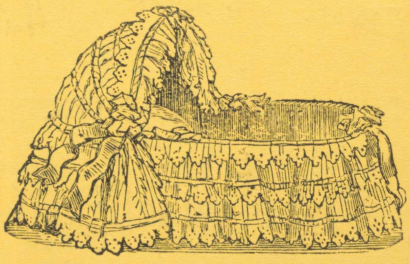

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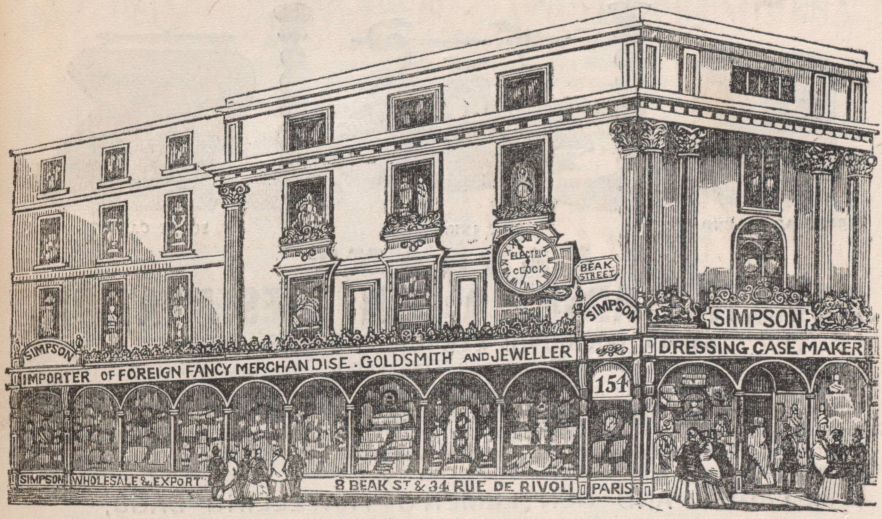

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French Drawing-room Clocks, from	2	2	0 to	50	0	0
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Ladies' Dressing-cases, electro-plated ..... ,,	1	10	0 ,,	15	0	0
Ladies' Dressing-cases, silver-fitted ..... ,,	5	10	0 ,,	100	0	0
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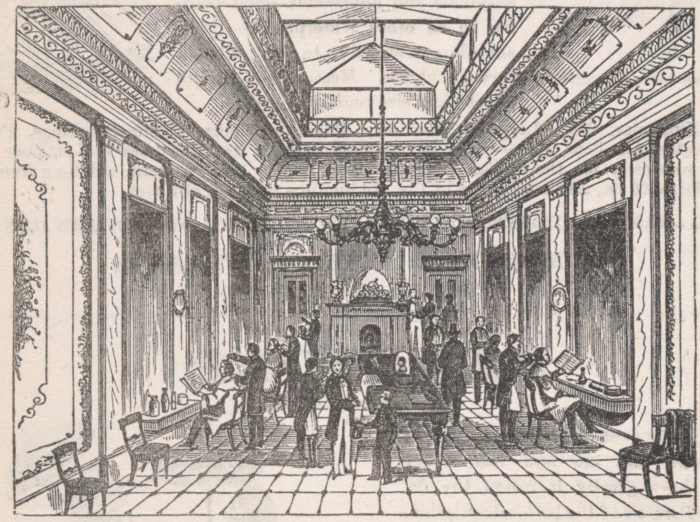

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I am, Sir, your humble servant,

To MR. KEATING, 79, St. Paul's Church-Yard. P. HAWKER.

N.B.—To prevent spurious imitations, please to observe that the words "KEATING'S COUGH LOZENGES" are engraven on the Government Stamp of each Box, without which none are genuine.

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WEIGHT 10 oz.

Sole Manufacturers of the celebrated Pocket Siphonia, remarkable for its lightness and softness of texture, easily folded to carry in the Pocket or on Saddle; the most *important* feature in this *Waterproofing* consists in its being mineralised, which effectually resists the powerful heat of the sun and the most violent rains, also obviating the stickiness and unpleasant smell peculiar to all other Waterproofs.—Price, according to size, 40s. to 50s.; all silk throughout, 50s. Measurement, length of coat, and size round the chest.

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Welcome.

Farewell.

CHAPTER XXI.

SAMARITANS.

LEST any tender-hearted reader should be in alarm for Mr. Harry Warrington's safety, and fancy that his broken-kneed horse had carried him altogether out of this life and history, let us set her mind easy at the beginning of this chapter, by assuring her that nothing very serious has happened. How can we afford to kill off our heroes, when they are scarcely out of their teens, and we have not reached the age of manhood of the story? We are in mourning already for one of our Virginians, who has come to grief in America; surely we cannot kill off the other in England? No, no. Heroes are not dispatched with such hurry and violence unless there is a cogent reason for making away with them. Were a gentleman to perish every time a horse came down with him, not only the hero, but the author of this chronicle would have gone under ground, whereas the former is but sprawling outside it, and will be brought to life again as soon as he has been carried into the house where Madame de Bernstein's servants have rung the bell.

And to convince you that at least this youngest of the Virginians is still alive, here is an authentic copy of a letter from the lady into whose house he was taken after his fall from Mr. Will's brute of a broken-kneed horse, and in whom he appears to have found a kind friend.

TO MRS. ESMOND WARRINGTON, OF CASTLEWOOD,

AT HER HOUSE AT RICHMOND, IN VIRGINIA.

If Mrs. Esmond Warrington of Virginia can call to mind twenty-three years ago, when Miss Rachel Esmond was at Kensington Boarding School, she may perhaps remember Miss Molly Benson, her class mate, who has forgotten all the little quarrels which they used to have together (in which Miss Molly was very often in the wrong), and only remembers the *generous, high-spirited, sprightly, Miss Esmond*, the Princess Pocahontas, to whom so many of our school-fellows paid court.

Dear Madam! I can never forget that you were *dear Rachel* once upon a time, as I was your dearest Molly. Though we parted not very good friends when you went home to Virginia, yet you know how fond we once were. I still, Rachel, have the gold *étui* your papa gave me when he came to *our speech-day* at Kensington, and we two performed the quarrel of Brutus and Cassius out of Shakspeare; and 'twas only yesterday morning I was dreaming that we were both called up to say our lesson before *the awful Miss Hardwood*, and that I did not know it, and that as usual Miss Rachel Esmond went above me. How well remembered those old days are! How young we grow as we think of them! I remember our walks and our exercises, our good King and Queen as they walked in Kensington Gardens, and their court following them, whilst we of Miss Hardwood's school curtsied in a row. I can tell still what we had for dinner on each day of the week, and point to the place where your garden was, which was always so much better kept than mine. So was Miss Esmond's chest of drawers a model of neatness, whilst mine were in a sad condition. Do you remember how we used to tell stories in the dormitory, and Madame Hibou, the French governess, would come out of bed and interrupt us with her *hooting?* Have you forgot the poor dancing master, who told us he had been waylaid by assassins, but who was beaten, it appears, by my lord your brother's footmen? My dear, your cousin, the lady Maria Esmond (her papa was, I think, but Viscount Castlewood in those times), has just been on a visit to this house, where you may be sure I did not recal those sad times to her remembrance, about which I am now chattering to Mrs. Esmond.

Her ladyship has been staying here, and another relative of yours, the Baroness of Bernstein, and the two ladies are both gone on to Tunbridge Wells; but another and dearer relative still remains in my house, and is sound asleep, I trust, in the very next room, and the name of this gentleman is Mr. Henry Esmond Warrington. Now, do

you understand how you come to hear from an old friend? Do not be alarmed, dear Madam! I know you are thinking at this moment, 'My boy is ill. That is why Miss Molly Benson writes to me.' No, my dear; Mr. Warrington *was* ill yesterday, but to-day he is very comfortable; and our Doctor, who is no less a person than my dear husband, Colonel Lambert, has blooded him, has set his shoulder, which was dislocated, and pronounces that in two days more Mr. Warrington will be quite ready to take the road.

I fear, I and my girls are sorry that he is so soon to be well. Yesterday evening, as we were at tea, there came a great ringing at our gate, which disturbed us all, as the bell very seldom sounds in this quiet place, unless a passing beggar pulls it for charity; and the servants, running out, returned with the news, that a young gentleman, who had a fall from his horse, was lying lifeless on the road, surrounded by the friends in whose company he was travelling. At this, my Colonel (who is sure the most Samaritan of men!) hastens away, to see how he can serve the fallen traveller, and presently, with the aid of the servants, and followed by two ladies, brings into the house such a pale, lifeless, beautiful, young man! Ah, my dear, how I rejoice to think that your child has found shelter and succour under my roof! that my husband has saved him from pain and fever, and has been the means of restoring him to you and health! We shall be friends again now, shall we not? I was very ill last year, and 'twas even thought I should die. Do you know, that I often thought of you then, and how you had parted from me in anger so many years ago? I began then a foolish note to you, which I was too sick to finish, to tell you that if I went the way appointed for us all, I should wish to leave the world in charity with every single being I had known in it.

Your cousin, the Right Honourable Lady Maria Esmond, showed a great deal of maternal tenderness and concern for her young kinsman after his accident. I am sure she hath a kind heart. The Baroness de Bernstein, who is of an advanced age, could not be expected to feel so keenly as *we young people*; but was, nevertheless, very much moved and interested until Mr. Warrington was restored to consciousness, when she said she was anxious to get on towards Tunbridge whither she was bound, and was afraid of all things to lie in a place where there was no doctor at hand. *My* Æsculapius laughingly said, he would not offer to attend upon a lady of quality, though he would answer for his young patient. Indeed, the Colonel, during his campaigns, has had plenty of practice in accidents of this nature, and I am certain, were we to call in all the faculty for twenty miles round, Mr. Warrington could get no better treatment. So, leaving the young gentleman to the care of me and my daughters, the Baroness and her ladyship took their leave of us, the latter very loth to go. When he is well enough, my Colonel will ride with him as far as Westerham, but *on his own horses*, where an old army-comrade of Mr. Lambert's resides. And, as this letter will not take the post for Falmouth until, by God's blessing,

your son is well and perfectly restored, you need be under no sort of alarm for him whilst under the roof of,

Madam,

Your affectionate humble servant,

MARY LAMBERT.

P.S. Thursday. ,, ,, ?

I am glad to hear (Mr. Warrington's coloured gentleman hath informed our people of the *gratifying circumstance*) that Providence hath blessed Mrs. Esmond with *such vast wealth*, and with an heir so likely to do credit to it. Our present means are amply sufficient, but will be small when divided amongst our survivors. Ah, dear Madam! I have heard of your calamity of last year. Though the Colonel and I have reared many children (five), we have lost two, and *a mother's heart* can feel for yours! I own to you, mine yearned to your boy to-day, when (in a manner *inexpressibly affecting* to me and Mr. Lambert) he mentioned his dear brother. 'Tis impossible to see your son, and not to love and regard him. I am thankful that it has been our lot to succour him in his trouble, and that in receiving the stranger within our gates, we should be giving hospitality to the son of an old friend.

Nature has written a letter of credit upon some men's faces, which is honoured almost wherever presented. Harry Warrington's countenance was so stamped in his youth. His eyes were so bright, his cheek so red and healthy, his look so frank and open, that almost all who beheld him, nay, even those who cheated him, trusted him. Nevertheless, as we have hinted, the lad was by no means the artless stripling he seemed to be. He was knowing enough with all his blushing cheeks; perhaps more wily and wary than he grew to be in after-age. Sure, a shrewd and generous man (who has led an honest life and has no secret blushes for his conscience) grows simpler as he grows older; arrives at his sum of right by more rapid processes of calculation; learns to eliminate false arguments more readily, and hits the mark of truth with less previous trouble of aiming, and disturbance of mind. Or is it only a senile delusion, that some of our vanities are cured with our growing years, and that we become more just in our perceptions of our own and our neighbour's short-comings? . . . I would humbly suggest that young people, though they look prettier, have larger eyes, and not near so many wrinkles about their eyelids, are often as artful as some of their elders. What little monsters of cunning your frank school-boys are! How they cheat mamma! how they hoodwink papa! how they humbug the housekeeper! how they cringe to the big boy for whom they fag at school! what a long lie and five years' hypocrisy and flattery is their conduct towards Dr. Birch! And the little boys' sisters? Are they any better, and is it only after they come out in the world that the little darlings learn a trick or two?

You may see, by the above letter of Mrs. Lambert, that she, like all good women (and, indeed, almost all bad women), was a sentimental person; and, as she looked at Harry Warrington laid in her best bed, after the Colonel had bled him and clapped in his shoulder, as holding by her husband's hand she beheld the lad in a sweet slumber, murmuring a faint inarticulate word or two in his sleep, a faint blush quivering on his cheek, she owned he was a pretty lad indeed, and confessed with a sort of compunction that neither of her two boys—Jack who was at Oxford, and Charles who was just gone back to school after the Bartlemytide holidays—was half so handsome as the Virginian. What a good figure the boy had, and when papa bled him, his arm was as white as any lady's!

"Yes, as you say, Jack might have been as handsome but for the small-pox: and as for Charley——" "Always took after his papa, my dear Molly," said the Colonel, looking at his own honest face in a little looking-glass with a cut border and a japanned frame, by which the chief guests of the worthy gentleman and lady had surveyed their patches and powder, or shaved their hospitable beards.

"*Did* I say so, my love?" whispered Mrs. Lambert, looking rather scared.

"No; but you thought so, Mrs. Lambert."

"How can you tell one's thoughts so, Martin?" asks the lady.

"Because I am a conjuror, and because you tell them yourself, my dear," answered her husband. "Don't be frightened: he won't wake after that draught I gave him. Because you never see a young fellow but you are comparing him with your own. Because you never hear of one but you are thinking which of our girls he shall fall in love with and marry."

"Don't be foolish, sir," says the lady, putting a hand up to the Colonel's lips. They have softly trodden out of their guest's bed-chamber by this time, and are in the adjoining dressing-closet, a snug little wainscotted room looking over gardens, with India curtains, more Japan chests and cabinets, a treasure of china, and a most refreshing odour of fresh lavender.

"You can't deny it, Mrs. Lambert," the Colonel resumes; "as you were looking at the young gentleman just now, you were thinking to yourself which of my girls will he marry? Shall it be Theo, or shall it be Hester? And then you thought of Lucy who was at boarding-school."

"There is no keeping any thing from you, Martin Lambert," sighs the wife.

"There is no keeping it out of your eyes, my dear. What is this burning desire all you women have for selling and marrying your daughters? We men don't wish to part with 'em. I am sure, for my part, I should not like yonder young fellow half as well if I thought he intended to carry one of my darlings away with him."

"Sure, Martin, I have been so happy myself," says the fond wife and

mother, looking at her husband with her very best eyes, "that I must wish my girls to do as I have done, and be happy, too!"

"Then you think good husbands are common, Mrs. Lambert, and that you may walk any day into the road before the house and find one shot out at the gate like a sack of coals?"

"Wasn't it providential, sir, that this young gentleman should be thrown over his horse's head at our very gate, and that he should turn out to be the son of my old schoolfellow and friend?" asked the wife. "There is something more than accident in such cases, depend upon that, Mr. Lambert!"

"And this was the stranger you saw in the candle three nights running, I suppose?"

"And in the fire, too, sir; twice a coal jumped out close by Theo. You may sneer, sir, but these things are *not* to be despised. Did I not see you distinctly coming back from Minorca, and dream of you at the very day and hour when you were wounded in Scotland?"

"How many times have you seen me wounded, when I had not a scratch, my dear? How many times have you seen me ill when I had no sort of hurt? You are always prophesying, and 'twere very hard on you if you were not sometimes right. Come! Let us leave our guest asleep comfortably, and go down and give the girls their French lesson."

So saying, the honest gentleman put his wife's arm under his, and they descended together the broad oak staircase of the comfortable old hall, round which hung the effigies of many foregone Lamberts, worthy magistrates, soldiers, country gentlemen, as was the Colonel whose acquaintance we have just made. The Colonel was a gentleman of pleasant, waggish humour. The French lesson which he and his daughters conned together was a scene out of Monsieur Moliere's comedy of "Tartuffe," and papa was pleased to be very facetious with Miss Theo, by calling her Madam, and by treating her with a great deal of mock respect and ceremony. The girls read together with their father a scene or two of his favourite author (nor were they less modest in those days, though their tongues were a little more free), and papa was particularly arch and funny as he read from Orgon's part in that celebrated play:

ORGON. Or sus, nous voila bien. J'ai, Mariane, en vous
Reconnu de tout temps un esprit assez doux,
Et de tout temps aussi vous m'avez été chere.
MARIANE. Je suis fort redevable à cet amour de pere.
ORGON. Fort bien. Que dites-vous de Tartufe notre hôte?
MARIANE. Qui? Moi?
ORGON. Vous. Voyez bien comme vous répondrez.
MARIANE. Hélas! J'en dirai, moi, tout ce que vous voudrez!

(Mademoiselle Mariane laughs and blushes in spite of herself, whilst reading this line.

ORGON. C'est parler sagement. Dites moi donc, ma fille,
Qu'en toute sa personne un haut mérite brille,
Qu'il touche votre cœur, et qu'il vous seroit doux
De le voir par mon choix devenir votre époux!

"Have we not read the scene prettily, Elmire?" says the Colonel, laughing, and turning round to his wife.

Elmira prodigiously admired Orgon's reading, and so did his daughters, and almost everything besides which Mr. Lambert said or did. Canst thou, O friendly reader, count upon the fidelity of an artless and tender heart or two, and reckon among the blessings which Heaven hath bestowed on thee the love of faithful women? Purify thine own heart, and try to make it worthy theirs. On thy knees, on thy knees, give thanks for the blessing awarded thee! All the prizes of life are nothing compared to that one. All the rewards of ambition, wealth, pleasure, only vanity and disappointment — grasped at greedily and fought for fiercely, and, over and over again, found worthless by the weary winners. But love seems to survive life, and to reach beyond it. I think we take it with us past the grave. Do we not still give it to those who have left us? May we not hope that they feel it for us, and that we shall leave it here in one or two fond bosoms, when we also are gone?

And whence, or how, or why, pray, this sermon? You see I know more about this Lambert family than you do to whom I am just presenting them: as how should you who never heard of them before? You may not like my friends: very few people do like strangers to whom they are presented with an outrageous flourish of praises on the part of the introducer. You say (quite naturally) what? Is this all? Are these the people he is so fond of? Why the girl 's not a beauty— the mother is good-natured, and may have been good-looking once, but she has no trace of it now—and, as for the father, he is quite an ordinary man. Granted: but don't you acknowledge that the sight of an honest man, with an honest, loving wife by his side, and surrounded by loving and obedient children, presents something very sweet and affecting to you? If you are made acquainted with such a person, and see the eager kindness of the fond faces round about him, and that pleasant confidence and affection which beams from his own, do you mean to say you are not touched and gratified? If you happen to stay in such a man's house, and at morning or evening see him and his children and domestics gathered together in a certain name, do you not join humbly in the petitions of those servants, and close them with a reverend Amen? That first night of his stay at Oakhurst, Harry Warrington, who had had a sleeping potion, and was awake sometimes rather feverish, thought he heard the evening hymn, and that his dearest brother George was singing it at home, in which delusion the patient went off again to sleep.

CHAPTER XXII.

IN HOSPITAL.

SINKING into a sweet slumber, and lulled by those harmonious sounds, our young patient passed a night of pleasant unconsciousness, and awoke in the morning to find a summer sun streaming in at the window, and his kind host and hostess smiling at his bed-curtains. He was ravenously hungry, and his doctor permitted him straightway to partake of a mess of chicken, which the doctor's wife told him had been prepared by the hands of one of her daughters.

One of her daughters? A faint image of a young person—of two young persons—with red cheeks and black waving locks, smiling round his couch, and suddenly departing thence, soon after he had come to himself, arose in the young man's mind. Then, then, there returned the remembrance of a female—lovely, it is true, but more elderly—certainly considerably older—and with f—— O horror and remorse! He writhed with anguish, as a certain recollection crossed him. An immense gulph of time gaped between him and the past. How long was it since he had heard that those pearls were artificial,—that those

golden locks were only pinchbeck? A long, long time ago, when he was a boy, an innocent boy. Now he was a man,—quite an old man. He had been bled copiously; he had a little fever; he had had nothing to eat for very many hours; he had a sleeping-draught, and a long, deep slumber after.

"What is it, my dear child?" cries kind Mrs. Lambert, as he started.

"Nothing, madam; a twinge in my shoulder," said the lad. "I speak to my host and hostess? Sure you have been very kind to me."

"We are old friends, Mr. Warrington. My husband, Colonel Lambert, knew your father, and I and your mamma were school-girls together at Kensington. You were no stranger to us when your aunt and cousin told us who you were."

"Are they here?" asked Harry, looking a little blank.

"They must have lain at Tunbridge Wells last night. They sent a horseman from Reigate yesterday for news of you.

"Ah! I remember," says Harry, looking at his bandaged arm.

"I have made a good cure of you, Mr. Warrington. And now Mrs. Lambert and the cook must take charge of you."

"Nay; Theo prepared the chicken and rice, Mr. Lambert," said the lady. "Will Mr. Warrington get up after he has had his breakfast? We will send your valet to you."

"If howling proves fidelity, your man must be a most fond, attached creature," says Mr. Lambert.

"He let your baggage travel off after all in your aunt's carriage," said Mrs. Lambert. "You must wear my husband's linen, which, I daresay, is not so fine as yours."

"Pish, my dear! my shirts are good shirts enough for any Christian," cries the Colonel.

"They are Theo's and Hester's work," says mamma. At which her husband arches his eyebrows and looks at her. "And Theo hath ripped and sewed your sleeve to make it quite comfortable for your shoulder," the lady added.

"What beautiful roses!" cries Harry, looking at a fine china vase full of them that stood on the toilet-table under the japan-framed glass.

"My daughter Theo cut them this morning. Well, Mr. Lambert? She *did* cut them!"

I suppose the Colonel was thinking that his wife introduced Theo too much into the conversation, and trod on Mrs. Lambert's slipper, or pulled her robe, or otherwise nudged her into a sense of propriety.

"And I fancied I heard some one singing the Evening Hymn very sweetly last night—or was it only a dream?" asked the young patient.

"Theo again, Mr. Warrington!" said the Colonel laughing. "My servants said your negro man began to sing it in the kitchen as if he was a church organ."

"Our people sing it at home, sir. My grandpapa used to love it very much. His wife's father was a great friend of good Bishop Ken

who wrote it; and—and my dear brother used to love it too," said the boy, his voice dropping.

It was then, I suppose, that Mrs. Lambert felt inclined to give the boy a kiss. His little accident, illness and recovery, the kindness of the people round about him, had softened Harry Warrington's heart, and opened it to better influences than those which had been brought to bear on it for some six weeks past. He was breathing a purer air than that tainted atmosphere of selfishness, and worldliness, and corruption, into which he had been plunged since his arrival in England. Sometimes the young man's fate, or choice, or weakness, leads him into the fellowship of the giddy and vain; happy he, whose lot makes him acquainted with the wiser company, whose lamps are trimmed, and whose pure hearts keep modest watch.

The pleased matron left her young patient devouring Miss Theo's mess of rice and chicken, and the Colonel seated by the lad's bedside. Gratitude to his hospitable entertainers, and contentment after a comfortable meal, caused in Mr. Warrington a very pleasant condition of mind and body. He was ready to talk now more freely than usually was his custom; for, unless excited by a strong interest or emotion, the young man was commonly taciturn and cautious in his converse with his fellows, and was by no means of an imaginative turn. Of books our youth had been but a very remiss student, nor were his remarks on such simple works as he had read, very profound or valuable; but regarding dogs, horses, and the ordinary business of life, he was a far better critic; and, with any person interested in such subjects, conversed on them freely enough.

Harry's host, who had considerable shrewdness, and experience of books, and cattle, and men, was pretty soon able to take the measure of his young guest in the talk which they now had together. It was now, for the first time, the Virginian learned that Mrs. Lambert had been an early friend of his mother's, and that the Colonel's own father had served with Harry's grandfather, Colonel Esmond, in the famous wars of Queen Anne. He found himself in a friend's country. He was soon at ease with his honest host, whose manners were quite simple and cordial, and who looked and seemed perfectly a gentleman, though he wore a plain fustian coat, and a waistcoat without a particle of lace.

"My boys are both away," said Harry's host, "or they would have shown you the country when you got up, Mr. Warrington. Now you can only have the company of my wife and her daughters. Mrs. Lambert hath told you already about one of them, Theo, our eldest, who made your broth, who cut your roses, and who mended your coat. She is not such a wonder as her mother imagines her to be: but little Theo is a smart little housekeeper, and a very good and cheerful lass, though her father says it."

"It is very kind of Miss Lambert to take so much care for me," says the young patient.

"She is no kinder to you than to any other mortal, and doth but her duty." Here the Colonel smiled. "I laugh at their mother for praising our children," he said, "and I think I am as foolish about them myself. The truth is, God hath given us very good and dutiful children, and I see no reason why I should disguise my thankfulness for such a blessing. You have never a sister, I think?"

"No, sir, I am alone now," Mr. Warrington said.

"Ay, truly, I ask your pardon for my thoughtlessness. Your man hath told our people what befel last year. I served with Braddock in Scotland; and hope he mended before he died. A wild fellow, sir, but there was a fund of truth about the man, and no little kindness under his rough swaggering manner. Your black fellow talks very freely about his master and his affairs. I suppose you permit him these freedoms as he rescued you—"

"Rescued *me?*" cries Mr. Warrington.

"From ever so many Indians on that very expedition. My Molly and I did not know we were going to entertain so prodigiously wealthy a gentleman. He saith that half Virginia belongs to you; but if the whole of North America were yours, we could but give you our best."

"Those negro boys, sir, lie like the father of all lies. They think it is for our honour to represent us as ten times as rich as we are. My mother has what would be a vast estate in England, and is a very good one at home. We are as well off as most of our neighbours, sir, but no better; and all our splendour is in Mr. Gumbo's foolish imagination. He never rescued me from an Indian in his life, and would run away at the sight of one, as my poor brother's boy did on that fatal day when he fell."

"The bravest man will do so at unlucky times," said the Colonel; "I myself saw the best troops in the world run at Preston, before a ragged mob of Highland savages."

"That was because the Highlanders fought for a good cause, sir."

"Do you think," asks Harry's host, "that the French Indians had the good cause in the fight of last year?"

"The scoundrels! I would have the scalp of every murderous red-skin among 'em!" cried Harry, clenching his fist. "They were robbing and invading the British territories, too. But the Highlanders were fighting for their king."

"We, on our side, were fighting for *our* king; and we ended by winning the battle," said the Colonel, laughing.

"Ah!" cried Harry; "if His Royal Highness the Prince had not turned back at Derby, your king and mine, now, would be his Majesty King James the Third!"

"Who made such a Tory of you, Mr. Warrington!" asked Lambert.

"Nay, sir, the Esmonds were always loyal!" answered the youth. "Had we lived at home, and twenty years sooner, brother and I often and often agreed that our heads would have been in danger. We certainly would have staked them for the king's cause."

"Yours is better on your shoulders than on a pole at Temple Bar. I have seen them there, and they don't look very pleasant, Mr. Warrington."

"I shall take off my hat, and salute them, whenever I pass the gate," cried the young man, "if the king and the whole court are standing by!"

"I doubt whether your relative, my Lord Castlewood, is as staunch a supporter of the king over the water," said Colonel Lambert, smiling: "or your aunt, the Baroness of Bernstein, who left you in our charge. Whatever her old partialities may have been, she has repented of them; she has rallied to our side, landed her nephews in the Household, and looks to find a suitable match for her nieces. If you have Tory opinions, Mr. Warrington, take an old soldier's advice, and keep them to yourself."

"Why, sir, I do not think that you will betray me!" said the boy.

"Not I, but others might. You did not talk in this way at Castlewood? I mean the old Castlewood which you have just come from."

"I might be safe amongst my own kinsmen, surely, sir," cried Harry.

"Doubtless. I would not say no. But a man's own kinsmen can play him slippery tricks at times, and he finds himself none the better for trusting them. I mean no offence to you or any of your family; but lacqueys have ears as well as their masters, and they carry about all sorts of stories. For instance, your black fellow is ready to tell all he knows about you, and a great deal more besides, as it would appear."

"Hath he told about the broken-kneed horse?" cried out Harry, turning very red.

"To say truth, my groom seemed to know something of the story, and said it was a shame a gentleman should sell another such a brute; let alone a cousin. I am not here to play the Mentor to you, or to carry about servants' tittle-tattle. When you have seen more of your cousins, you will form your own opinion of them; meanwhile, take an old soldier's advice, I say again, and be cautious with whom you deal, and what you say."

Very soon after this little colloquy, Mr. Lambert's guest rose, with the assistance of Gumbo, his valet, to whom he, for a hundredth time at least, promised a sound caning if ever he should hear that Gumbo had ventured to talk about his affairs again in the servants' hall,—which prohibition Gumbo solemnly vowed and declared he would for ever obey; but I daresay he was chattering the whole of the Castlewood secrets to his new friends of Colonel Lambert's kitchen; for Harry's hostess certainly heard a number of stories concerning him which she could not prevent her housekeeper from telling; though of course I would not accuse that worthy lady, or any of her sex or ours, of undue curiosity regarding their neighbours'

affairs. But how can you prevent servants talking, or listening when the faithful attached creatures talk to you?

Mr. Lambert's house stood on the outskirts of the little town of Oakhurst, which, if he but travels in the right direction, the patient reader will find on the road between Farnham and Reigate,—and Madame Bernstein's servants naturally pulled at the first bell at hand, when the young Virginian met with his mishap. A few hundred yards farther, was the long street of the little old town, where hospitality might have been found under the great swinging ensigns of a couple of tuns, and medical relief was to be had, as a blazing gilt pestle and mortar indicated. But what surgeon could have ministered more cleverly to a patient than Harry's host, who tended him without a fee, or what Boniface could make him more comfortably welcome?

Two tall gates, each surmounted by a couple of heraldic monsters, led from the high road up to a neat, broad stone terrace, whereon stood Oakhurst House; a square brick building, with windows faced with stone, and many high chimneys, and a tall roof surmounted by a fair balustrade. Behind the house stretched a large garden, where there was plenty of room for cabbages as well as roses to grow; and before the mansion, separated from it by the high-road, was a field of many acres, where the Colonel's cows and horses were at grass. Over the centre window was a carved shield supported by the same monsters who pranced or ramped upon the entrance-gates; and a coronet over the shield. The fact is, that the house had been originally the jointure-house of Oakhurst Castle, which stood hard by,—its chimneys and turrets appearing over the surrounding woods, now bronzed with the darkest foliage of summer. Mr. Lambert's was the greatest house in Oakhurst town; but the Castle was of more importance than all the town put together. The Castle and the jointure-house had been friends of many years' date. Their fathers had fought side by side in Queen Anne's wars. There were two small pieces of ordnance on the terrace of the jointure-house, and six before the Castle, which had been taken out of the same privateer, which Mr. Lambert and his kinsman and commander, Lord Wrotham, had brought into Harwich in one of their voyages home from Flanders with dispatches from the great Duke.

His toilette completed with Mr. Gumbo's aid, his fair hair neatly dressed by that artist, and his open ribboned sleeve and wounded shoulder supported by a handkerchief which hung from his neck, Harry Warrington made his way out of his sick chamber, preceded by his kind host, who led him first down a broad oak stair, round which hung many pikes and muskets of ancient shape, and so into a square marble paved room, from which the living-rooms of the house branched off. There were more arms in this hall—pikes and halberts of ancient date, pistols and jack-boots of more than a century old, that had done service in Cromwell's wars, a tattered French guidon which had been

borne by a French gendarme at Malplaquet, and a pair of cumbrous Highland broadswords, which, having been carried as far as Derby, had been flung away on the fatal field of Culloden. Here were breastplates and black morions of Oliver's troopers, and portraits of stern warriors in buff jerkins and plain bands and short hair. "They fought against your grandfathers and King Charles, Mr. Warrington," said Harry's host. "I don't hide that. They rode to join the Prince of Orange at Exeter. We were Whigs, young gentleman, and something more. John Lambert, the Major-General, was a kinsman of our house, and we were all more or less partial to short hair and long sermons. You do not seem to like either?" Indeed, Harry's face manifested signs of anything but pleasure whilst he examined the portraits of the Parliamentary heroes. "Be not alarmed, we are very good churchmen now. My eldest son will be in orders ere long. He is now travelling as governor to my Lord Wrotham's son in Italy, and as for our women, they are all for the Church, and carry me with 'em. Every woman is a Tory at heart. Mr. Pope says a rake, but I think t'other is the more charitable word. Come, let us go see them," and, flinging open the dark oak door, Colonel Lambert led his young host into the parlour where the ladies were assembled.

"Here is Miss Hester," said the Colonel, "and this is Miss Theo, the soup-maker, the tailoress, the harpsichord player, and the songstress, who set you to sleep last night. Make a curtsey to the gentleman, young ladies! O, I forgot, and Theo is the mistress of the roses which you admired a short while since in your bedroom. I think she has kept some of them in her cheeks."

In fact, Miss Theo was making a profound curtsey and blushing most modestly as her papa spoke. I am not going to describe her person,—though we shall see a great deal of her in the course of this history. She was not a particular beauty. Harry Warrington was not over head and ears in love with her at an instant's warning and faithless to—to that other individual with whom, as we have seen, the youth had lately been smitten. Miss Theo had kind eyes and a sweet voice; a ruddy freckled cheek and a round white neck, on which, out of a little cap such as misses wore in those times, fell rich curling clusters of dark brown hair. She was not a delicate or sentimental looking person. Her arms, which were worn bare from the elbow like other ladies' arms in those days, were very jolly and red. Her feet were not so miraculously small but that you could see them without a telescope. There was nothing waspish about her waist. This young person was sixteen years of age, and looked older. I don't know what call she had to blush so when she made her curtsey to the stranger. It was such a deep ceremonial curtsey as you never see at present. She and her sister both made these "cheeses" in compliment to the new comer, and with much stately agility.

As Miss Theo rose up out of this salute, her papa tapped her under the chin (which was of the double sort of chins), and laughingly hummed

out the line which he had read the day. *Eh bien! que dites-vous, ma fille, de notre hôte?*"

"Nonsense, Mr. Lambert!" cries mamma.

"Nonsense is sometimes the best kind of sense in the world," said Colonel Lambert. His guest looked puzzled.

"Are you fond of nonsense?" the Colonel continued to Harry, seeing by the boy's face that the latter had no great love or comprehension of his favourite humour. "We consume a vast deal of it in this house. Rabelais is my favourite reading. My wife is all for Mr. Fielding and Theophrastus. I think Theo prefers Tom Brown, and Mrs. Hetty here loves Dean Swift."

"Our papa is talking what *he* loves," says Miss Hetty.

"And what is that, miss?" asks the father of his second daughter.

"Sure, sir, you said yourself it was nonsense," answers the young lady, with a saucy toss of her head.

"Which of them do you like best, Mr. Warrington?" asked the honest Colonel.

"Which of whom, sir?"

"The Curate of Meudon, or the Dean of St. Patrick's, or honest Tom, or Mr. Fielding?"

"And what were they, sir?"

"They! Why they wrote books."

"Indeed, sir. I never heard of either one of 'em," said Harry, hanging down his head. "I fear my book learning was neglected at home, sir. My brother had read every book that ever was wrote, I think. He could have talked to you about 'em for hours together."

With this little speech Mrs. Lambert's eyes turned to her daughter, and Miss Theo cast hers down and blushed.

"Never mind, honesty is better than books any day, Mr. Warrington!" cried the jolly Colonel. "You may go through the world very honourably without reading any of the books I have been talking of, and some of them might give you more pleasure than profit."

"I know more about horses and dogs than Greek and Latin, sir. We most of us do in Virginia," said Mr. Warrington.

"You are like the Persians; you can ride and speak the truth."

"Are the Prussians very good on horseback, sir? I hope I shall see their king and a campaign or two, either with 'em or against 'em," remarked Colonel Lambert's guest. Why did Miss Theo look at her mother, and why did that good woman's face assume a sad expression?

Why? Because young lasses are bred in humdrum country towns, do you suppose they never indulge in romances? Because they are modest and have never quitted mother's apron, do you suppose they have no thoughts of their own? What happens in spite of all those precautions which the King and Queen take for their darling princess, those dragons, and that impenetrable forest, and that castle of steel? The fairy prince penetrates the impenetrable forest, finds the weak point in the dragon's scale-armour, and gets the better of all the ogres

who guard the castle of steel. Away goes the princess to him. She knew him at once. Her band-boxes and portmanteaux are filled with her best clothes and all her jewels. She has been ready ever so long.

That is in fairy tales, you understand—where the blessed hour and youth always arrive, the ivory horn is blown at the castle gate; and far off in her beauteous bower the princess hears it, and starts up, and knows that there is the right champion. He is always ready. Look! how the giants' heads tumble off as, falchion in hand, he gallops over the bridge on his white charger! How should that virgin, locked up in that inaccessible fortress, where she has never seen any man that was not eighty, or hump-backed, or her father, know that there were such beings in the world as young men? I suppose there's an instinct. I suppose there's a season. I never spoke for my part to a fairy princess, or heard as much from any unenchanted or enchanting maiden. Ne'er a one of them has ever whispered her pretty little secrets to me, or perhaps confessed them to herself, her mamma, or her nearest and dearest confidante. But they *will* fall in love. Their little hearts are constantly throbbing at the window of expectancy on the look-out for the champion. They are always hearing his horn. They are for ever on the tower looking out for the hero. Sister Ann, Sister Ann, do you see him? Surely 'tis a knight with curling mustachios, a flashing scimitar, and a suit of silver armour. Oh, no! it is only a costermonger with his donkey and a pannier of cabbage! Sister Ann, Sister Ann, what is that cloud of dust?' Oh, it is only a farmer's man driving a flock of pigs from market. Sister Ann, Sister Ann, who is that splendid warrior advancing in scarlet and gold? He nears the castle, he clears the drawbridge, he lifts the ponderous hammer at the gate. Ah, me, he knocks twice! 'Tis only the post-man with a double letter from Northamptonshire! So it is we make false starts in life. I don't believe there is any such thing known as first love—not within man's or woman's memory. No male or female remembers his or her first inclination any more than his or her own christening. What? You fancy that your sweet mistress, your spotless spinster, your blank maiden just out of the school-room, never cared for any but you? And she tells you so? O, you idiot! When she was four years old she had a tender feeling towards the Buttons who brought the coals up to the nursery, or the little sweep at the crossing, or the music master, or never mind whom. She had a secret longing towards her brother's schoolfellow, or the third charity boy at church, and if occasion had served, the comedy enacted with you had been performed along with another. I do not mean to say that she confessed this amatory sentiment, but that she had it. Lay down this page, and think how many and many and many a time you were in love before you selected the present Mrs. Jones as the partner of your name and affections!

So, from the way in which Theo held her head down, and exchanged looks with her mother, when poor unconscious Harry called the Persians

the Prussians, and talked of serving a campaign with them, I make no doubt she was feeling ashamed, and thinking within herself, "Is this the hero with whom my mamma and I have been in love for these twenty-four hours, and whom we have endowed with every perfection? How beautiful, pale, and graceful he looked yesterday as he lay on the ground! How his curls fell over his face! How sad it was to see his poor white arm, and the blood trickling from it when papa bled him! And now he is well and amongst us, he is handsome certainly, but oh, is it possible he is—he is stupid?" When she lighted the lamp and looked at him, did Psyche find Cupid out; and is that the meaning of the old allegory? The wings of love drop off at this discovery. The fancy can no more soar and disport in skiey regions, the beloved object ceases at once to be celestial, and remains plodding on earth, entirely unromantic and substantial.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HOLYDAYS.

MRS. Lambert's little day-dream was over. Miss Theo and her mother were obliged to confess, in their hearts, that their hero was but an ordinary mortal. They uttered few words on the subject, but each knew the other's thoughts as people who love each other do; and mamma, by an extra tenderness and special caressing manner towards her daughter, sought to console her for her disappointment. "Never mind, my dear"—the maternal kiss whispered on the filial cheek—"our hero has turned out to be but an ordinary mortal, and none such is good enough for my Theo. Thou shalt have a real husband ere long, if there be one in England. Why, I was scarce fifteen when your father saw me at the Bury Assembly, and while I was yet at school, I used to vow that I never would have any other man. If Heaven gave me such a husband—the best man in the whole kingdom—sure it will bless my child equally, who deserves a king, if she fancies him!" Indeed, I am not sure that Mrs. Lambert—who, of course, knew the age of the Prince of Wales, and was aware how handsome and good a young prince he was—did not expect that he too would come riding by her gate, and perhaps tumble down from his horse there, and be taken into the house, and be cured, and cause his royal grandpapa to give Martin Lambert a regiment, and fall in love with Theo.

The Colonel for his part, and his second daughter Miss Hetty, were on the laughing, scornful, unbelieving side. Mamma was always match-making. Indeed, Mrs. Lambert was much addicted to novels, and cried her eyes out over them with great assiduity. No coach ever passed the gate, but she expected a husband for her girls would alight from it and ring the bell. As for Miss Hetty, she allowed her tongue to wag in a more than usually saucy way: she made a hundred sly allusions to their guest. She introduced Prussia and Persia into their conversation with abominable pertness and frequency. She asked whether the present King of Prussia was called the Shaw or the Sophy, and how far it was from Ispahan to Saxony, which his Majesty was at present invading, and about which war papa was so busy with his maps and his newspapers? She brought down the Persian Tales from her mamma's closet, and laid them slily on the table in the parlour where the family sate. *She* would not marry a Persian prince for her part; she would prefer a gentleman who might not have more than one wife at a time. She called our young Virginian Theo's gentleman, Theo's prince. She asked mamma if she wished her, Hetty, to take the other visitor, the black prince, for herself? Indeed, she rallied her sister and her mother unceasingly on their sentimentalities, and would never stop until she had made them angry, when she would begin to cry herself, and kiss them violently one after the other, and coax them back into good humour. Simple Harry Warrington meanwhile knew nothing of all the jokes, the tears, quarrels, reconciliations, hymeneal plans, and so forth, of which he was the innocent occasion. A hundred allusions to the Prussians and Persians were shot at him, and those Parthian arrows did not penetrate his hide at all. A Shaw? A Sophy? very likely he thought a Sophy was a lady, and would have deemed it the height of absurdity that a man with a great black beard should have any such name. We fall into the midst of a quiet family: we drop like a stone, say, into a pool,—we are perfectly compact and cool, and little know the flutter and excitement we make there, disturbing the fish, frightening the ducks, and agitating the whole surface of the water. How should Harry know the effect which his sudden appearance produced in this little, quiet, sentimental family? He thought quite well enough of himself on many points, but was diffident as yet regarding women, being of that age when young gentlemen require encouragement and to be brought forward, and having been brought up at home in very modest and primitive relations towards the other sex. So Miss Hetty's jokes played round the lad, and he minded them no more than so many summer gnats. It was not that he was stupid, as she certainly thought him: he was simple, too much occupied with himself and his own honest affairs to think of others. Why, what tragedies, comedies, interludes, intrigues, farces, are going on under our noses in friends' drawing-rooms where we visit every day, and we remain utterly ignorant, self-satisfied, and blind! As these sisters

sate and combed their flowing ringlets of nights, or talked with each other in the great bed where according to the fashion of the day they lay together, how should Harry know that he had so great a share in their thoughts, jokes, conversation? Three days after his arrival, his new and hospitable friends were walking with him in my Lord Wrotham's fine park, where they were free to wander; and here, on a piece of water, they came to some swans, which the young ladies were in the habit of feeding with bread. As the birds approached the young women, Hetty said, with a queer look at her mother and sister, and then a glance at her father, who stood by, honest, happy, in a red waistcoat,—Hetty said: "Mamma's swans are something like these, papa."

"What swans, my dear?" says mamma.

"Something like, but not quite. They have shorter necks than these, and are scores of them on our common," continues Miss Hetty. "I saw Betty plucking one in the kitchen this morning. We shall have it for dinner, with apple-sauce and——"

"Don't be a little goose!" says Miss Theo.

"And sage and onions. Do you love swan, Mr. Warrington?"

"I shot three last winter on our river," said the Virginian gentleman. "Ours are not such white birds as these—they eat very well though." The simple youth had not the slightest idea that he himself was an allegory at that very time, and that Miss Hetty was narrating a fable regarding him. In some exceedingly recondite Latin work I have read that, long before Virginia was discovered, other folks were equally dull of comprehension.

So it was a premature sentiment on the part of Miss Theo—that little tender flutter of the bosom which we have acknowledged she felt on first beholding the Virginian, so handsome, pale, and bleeding. *This* was not the great passion which she knew her heart could feel. Like the birds, it had wakened and begun to sing, at a false dawn. Hop back to thy perch, and cover thy head with thy wing, thou tremulous little fluttering creature! It is not yet light, and roosting is as yet better than singing. Anon will come morning, and the whole sky will redden, and you shall soar up into it and salute the sun with your music.

One little phrase, some five-and-thirty lines back, perhaps the fair and suspicious reader has remarked: "*Three days after his arrival*, Harry was walking with," &c., &c. If he could walk—which it appeared he could do perfectly well—what business had he to be walking with anybody but Lady Maria Esmond on the Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells? His shoulder was set: his health was entirely restored: he had not even a change of coats, as we have seen, and was obliged to the Colonel for his raiment. Surely a young man in such a condition had no right to be lingering on at Oakhurst, and was bound by every tie of duty and convenience, by love, by relationship, by a gentle heart waiting for him, by the washerwoman finally, to go to

Tunbridge. Why did he stay behind, unless he was in love with either of the young ladies? (and we say he wasn't.) Could it be that he did not want to go? Hath the gracious reader understood the meaning of the mystic S with which the last chapter commences and in which the designer has feebly endeavoured to depict the notorious Sinbad the Sailor surmounted by that odious old man of the sea? What if Harry Warrington should be that sailor, and his fate that choking, deadening, inevitable old man? What if for two days past he has felt those knees throttling him round the neck? if his fell aunt's purpose is answered, and if his late love is killed as dead by her poisonous communications as Fair Rosamond was by her royal and legitimate rival? Is Hero then lighting the lamp up, and getting ready the supper, whilst Leander is sitting comfortably with some other party, and never in the least thinking of taking to the water? Ever since that coward's blow was struck in Lady Maria's back by her own relative, surely kind hearts must pity her ladyship. I know she has faults—ay, and wears false hair and false never mind what. But a woman in distress, shall we not pity her—a lady of a certain age, are we going to laugh at her because of her years? Between her old aunt and her unhappy delusion, be sure my Lady Maria Esmond is having no very pleasant time of it at Tunbridge Wells. There is no one to protect her. Madam Beatrix has her all to herself. Lady Maria is poor, and hopes for money from her aunt. Lady Maria has a secret or two which the old woman knows, and brandishes over her. I for one am quite melted and grow soft-hearted as I think of her. Imagine her alone, and a victim to that old woman! Paint to yourself that antique Andromeda (if you please we will allow that rich flowing head of hair to fall over her shoulders) chained to a rock on Mount Ephraim, and given up to that dragon of a Baroness! Succour, Perseus! Come quickly with thy winged feet and flashing falchion! Perseus is not in the least hurry. The dragon has her will of Andromeda for day after day.

Harry Warrington, who would not have allowed his dislocated and mended shoulder to keep him from going out hunting, remained day after day contentedly at Oakhurst, with each day finding the kindly folks who welcomed him more to his liking. Perhaps he had never, since his grandfather's death, been in such good company. His lot had lain amongst fox-hunting Virginian squires, with whose society he had put up very contentedly, riding their horses, living their lives, and sharing their punch-bowls. The ladies of his own and mother's acquaintance were very well bred, and decorous, and pious, no doubt, but somewhat narrow-minded. It was but a little place, his home, with its pompous ways, small etiquettes and punctilios, small flatteries, small conversations and scandals. Until he had left the place, some time after, he did not know how narrow and confined his life had been there. He was free enough personally. He had dogs and horses, and might shoot and hunt for scores of miles round about: but the little

lady mother domineered at home, and when there he had to submit to her influence and breathe her air.

Here the lad found himself in the midst of a circle where everything about him was incomparably gayer, brighter, and more free. He was living with a man and woman who had seen the world, though they lived retired from it, who had both of them happened to enjoy from their earliest times the use not only of good books, but of good company —those live books, which are such pleasant and sometimes such profitable reading. Society has this good at least: that it lessens our conceit, by teaching us our insignificance, and making us acquainted with our betters. If you are a young person who read this, depend upon it, sir or madam, there is nothing more wholesome for you than to acknowledge and to associate with your superiors. If I could, I would not have my son Thomas first Greek and Latin prize boy, first oar, and cock of the school. Better for his soul's and body's welfare that he should have a good place, not the first—a fair set of competitors round about him, and a good thrashing now and then, with a hearty shake afterwards of the hand which administered the beating. What honest man that can choose his lot would be a prince, let us say, and have all society walking backwards before him, only obsequious household-gentlemen to talk to, and all mankind mum except when your High Mightiness asks a question and gives permission to speak? One of the great benefits which Harry Warrington received from this family, before whose gate Fate had shot him, was to begin to learn that he was a profoundly ignorant young fellow, and that there were many people in the world far better than he knew himself to be. Arrogant a little with some folks, in the company of his superiors he was magnanimously docile. We have seen how faithfully he admired his brother at home, and his friend, the gallant young Colonel of Mount Vernon: of the gentlemen, his kinsmen at Castlewood, he had felt himself at least the equal. In his new acquaintance at Oakhurst he found a man who had read far more books than Harry could pretend to judge of, who had seen the world and come unwounded out of it, as he had out of the dangers and battles which he had confronted, and who had goodness and honesty written on his face and breathing from his lips, for which qualities our brave lad had always an instinctive sympathy and predilection.

As for the women, they were the kindest, merriest, most agreeable he had as yet known. They were pleasanter than Parson Broadbent's black-eyed daughter at home, whose laugh carried as far as a gun. They were quite as well-bred as the Castlewood ladies, with the exception of Madam Beatrix (who, indeed, was as grand as an empress on some occasions). But somehow, after a talk with Madam Beatrix, and vast amusement and interest in her stories, the lad would come away as with a bitter taste in his mouth, and fancy all the world wicked round about him. They were not in the least squeamish; and laughed over pages of Mr. Fielding, and cried over volumes of Mr. Richardson,

containing jokes and incidents which would make Mrs. Grundy's hair stand on end, yet their merry prattle left no bitterness behind it: their tales about this neighbour and that were droll, not malicious; the curtsies and salutations with which the folks of the little neighbouring town received them, how kindly and cheerful! their bounties how cordial! Of a truth it is good to be with good people. How good Harry Warrington did not know at the time, perhaps, or until subsequent experience showed him contrasts, or caused him to feel remorse. Here was a tranquil sunshiny day of a life that was to be agitated and stormy—a happy hour or two to remember. Not much happened during the happy hour or two. It was only sweet sleep, pleasant waking, friendly welcome, serene pastime. The gates of the old house seemed to shut the wicked world out somehow, and the inhabitants within to be better, and purer, and kinder than other people. He was not in love; O no! not the least, either with saucy Hetty or generous Theodosia: but when the time came for going away, he fastened on both their hands, and felt an immense regard for them. He thought he should like to know their brothers, and that they must be fine fellows; and as for Mrs. Lambert, I believe she was as sentimental at his departure as if he had been the last volume of Clarissa Harlowe.

"He is very kind and honest," said Theo, gravely, as, looking from the terrace, they saw him and their father and servants riding away on the road to Westerham.

"I don't think him stupid at all now," said little Hetty; "and, mamma, I think, he is very like a swan indeed."

"It felt just like one of the boys going to school," said mamma.

"Just like it," said Theo, sadly.

"I am glad he has got papa to ride with him to Westerham," resumed Miss Hetty, "and that he bought Farmer Briggs's horse. I don't like his going to those Castlewood people. I am sure that Madame Bernstein is a wicked old woman. I expected to see her ride away on her crooked stick."

"Hush, Hetty!"

"Do you think she would float if they tried her in the pond as poor old Mother Hely did at Elmhurst? The other old woman seemed fond of him—I mean the one with the fair *tour*. She looked very melancholy when she went away; but Madame Bernstein whisked her off with her crutch, and she was obliged to go. I don't care, Theo. I *know* she is a wicked woman. You think everybody good, you do, because you never do anything wrong yourself."

"My Theo *is* a good girl," says the mother, looking fondly at both her daughters.

"Then why do we call her a miserable sinner?"

"We are all so, my love," said mamma.

"What, papa too? You know you don't think so," cries Miss Hester. And to allow this was almost more than Mrs. Lambert could afford.

"What was that you told John to give to Mr. Warrington's black man?"

Mamma owned, with some shamefacedness, it was a bottle of her cordial water and a cake which she had bid Betty make. "I feel quite like a mother to him, my dears, I can't help owning it,—and you know both our boys still like one of our cakes to take to school or college with them."

CHAPTER XXIV.

FROM OAKHURST TO TUNBRIDGE.

AVING her lily handkerchief in token of adieu to the departing travellers, Mrs. Lambert and her girls watched them pacing leisurely on the first few hundred yards of their journey, and until such time as a tree-clumped corner of the road hid them from the ladies' view. Behind that clump of limes the good matron had many a time watched those she loved best disappear. Husband departing to battle and danger, sons to school, each after the other, had gone on his way behind yonder green trees, returning as it pleased Heaven's will at his good time, and bringing pleasure and love back to the happy little family. Besides their own instinctive nature (which to be sure aids wonderfully in the matter), the leisure and contemplation attendant upon their home life serve to foster the tenderness and fidelity of our women. The men gone, there is all day to think about them, and to-morrow and to-morrow—when there certainly will be a letter—and so on. There is the vacant room to go look at, where the boy slept last night, and the impression of his carpet-bag is still on the bed. There is his whip hung up in the hall, and his fishing-rod and basket—mute memorials of the brief by-gone pleasures. At dinner there comes up that cherry-tart, half of which our darling ate at two o'clock in spite of his melancholy, and with a choking

little sister on each side of him. The evening prayer is said without that young scholar's voice to utter the due responses. Midnight and silence come, and the good mother lies wakeful, thinking how one of the dear accustomed brood is away from the nest. Morn breaks, home and holydays have passed away, and toil and labour have begun for him. So those rustling limes formed, as it were, a screen between the world and our ladies of the house at Oakhurst. Kind-hearted Mrs. Lambert always became silent and thoughtful, if by chance she and her girls walked up to the trees in the absence of the men of the family. She said she would like to carve their names up on the grey silvered trunks, in the midst of true-lovers' knots, as was then the kindly fashion; and Miss Theo, who had an exceeding elegant turn that way, made some verses regarding the trees, which her delighted parent transmitted to a periodical of those days.

"Now we are out of sight of the ladies," says Colonel Lambert, giving a parting salute with his hat, as the pair of gentlemen trotted past the limes in question. "I know my wife always watches at her window until we are round this corner. I hope we shall have you seeing the trees and the house, again, Mr. Warrington; and the boys being at home, mayhap there will be better sport for you."

"I never want to be happier, sir, than I have been," replied Mr. Warrington; "and I hope you will let me say, that I feel as if I am leaving quite old friends behind me."

"The friend at whose house we shall sup to-night hath a son, who is an old friend of our family, too, and my wife, who is an inveterate marriage-monger, would have made a match between him and one of my girls, but that the Colonel hath chosen to fall in love with somebody else."

"Ah!" sighed Mr. Warrington.

"Other folks have done the same thing. There were brave fellows before Agamemnon."

"I beg your pardon, sir. Is the gentleman's name—Aga——. I did not quite gather it," meekly inquired the younger traveller.

"No, his name is James Wolfe," cried the Colonel, smiling. "He is a young fellow still, or what we call so, being scarce thirty years old. He is the youngest lieutenant-colonel in the army, unless, to be sure, we except a few scores of our nobility, who take rank before us common folk."

"Of course, of course!" says the Colonel's young companion, with true colonial notions of aristocratic precedence.

"And I have seen him commanding captains, and very brave captains, who were thirty years his seniors, and who had neither his merit nor his good fortune. But, lucky as he hath been, no one envies his superiority, for, indeed, most of us acknowledge that he is our superior. He is beloved by every man of our old regiment, and knows every one of them. He is a good scholar as well as a consummate soldier, and a master of many languages."

"Ah, sir!" said Harry Warrington, with a sigh of great humility; "I feel that I have neglected my own youth sadly; and am come to England but an ignoramus. Had my dear brother been alive, he would have represented our name and our colony, too, better than I can do. George was a scholar; George was a musician; George could talk with the most learned people in our country, and I make no doubt would have held his own here. Do you know, sir, I am glad to have come home, and to you especially, if but to learn how ignorant I am."

"If you know that well, 'tis a great gain already," said the Colonel, with a smile.

"At home, especially of late, and since we lost my brother, I used to think myself a mighty fine fellow, and have no doubt that the folks round about flattered me. I am wiser now,—that is, I hope I am,—though perhaps I am wrong, and only bragging again. But you see, sir, the gentry in our colony don't know very much, except about dogs and horses, and betting, and games. I wish I knew more about books, and less about them."

"Nay. Dogs and horses are very good books, too, in their way, and we may read a deal of truth out of 'em. Some men are not made to be scholars, and may be very worthy citizens and gentlemen in spite of their ignorance. What call have all of us to be especially learned or wise, or to take a first place in the world? His Royal Highness is commander, and Martin Lambert is colonel, and Jack Hunt, who rides behind yonder, was a private soldier, and is now a very honest, worthy groom. So as we all do our best in our station, it matters not much whether that be high or low. Nay, how do we know what is high and what is low? and whether Jack's currycomb, or my epaulets, or his Royal Highness's baton, may not turn out to be pretty equal? When I began life, *et militavi non sine*—never mind what—I dreamed of success and honour; now I think of duty, and yonder folks, from whom we parted a few hours ago. Let us trot on, else we shall not reach Westerham before nightfall."

At Westerham the two friends were welcomed by their hosts, a stately matron, an old soldier, whose recollections and services were of five and forty years back, and the son of this gentleman and lady, the lieutenant-colonel of Kingsley's regiment, that was then stationed at Maidstone, whence the Colonel had come over on a brief visit to his parents. Harry looked with some curiosity at this officer, who, young as he was, had seen so much service, and obtained a character so high. There was little of the beautiful in his face. He was very lean and very pale; his hair was red, his nose and cheek-bones were high; but he had a fine courtesy towards his elders, a cordial greeting towards his friends, and an animation in conversation which caused those who heard him to forget, even to admire his homely looks.

Mr. Warrington was going to Tunbridge? Their James would bear him company, the lady of the house said, and whispered something to

Colonel Lambert at supper, which occasioned smiles and a knowing wink or two from that officer. He called for wine, and toasted "Miss Lowther." "With all my heart," cried the enthusiastic Colonel James, and drained his glass to the very last drop. Mamma whispered her friend how James and the lady were going to make a match, and how she came of the famous Lowther family of the North.

"If she was the daughter of King Charlemagne," cries Lambert, "she is not too good for James Wolfe, or for his mother's son."

"Mr. Lambert would not say so if he knew her," the young Colonel declared.

"O, of course, she is the priceless pearl, and you are nothing," cries mamma. "No. I am of Colonel Lambert's opinion; and, if she brought all Cumberland to you for a jointure, I should say it was by James's due. That is the way with 'em, Mr. Warrington. We tend our children through fevers, and measles, and hooping-cough, and small-pox; we send them to the army and can't sleep at night for thinking; we break our hearts at parting with 'em, and have them at home only for a week or two in the year, or may-be ten years, and, after all our care, there comes a lass with a pair of bright eyes, and away goes our boy, and never cares a fig for us afterwards."

"And pray, my dear, how did you come to marry James's papa?" said the elder Colonel Wolfe. "And why didn't you stay at home with your parents?"

"Because James's papa was gouty and wanted somebody to take care of him I suppose; not because I liked him a bit," answers the lady: and so with much easy talk and kindness the evening passed away.

On the morrow, and with many expressions of kindness and friendship for his late guest, Colonel Lambert gave over the young Virginian to Mr. Wolfe's charge, and turned his horse's head homewards, while the two gentlemen sped towards Tunbridge Wells. Wolfe was in a hurry to reach the place, Harry Warrington was, perhaps, not quite so eager: nay, when Lambert rode towards his own home, Harry's thoughts followed him with a great deal of longing desire to the parlour at Oakhurst, where he had spent three days in happy calm. Mr. Wolfe agreed in all Harry's enthusiastic praises of Mr. Lambert, and of his wife, and of his daughters, and of all that excellent family. To have such a good name, and to live such a life as Colonel Lambert's," said Wolfe, "seem to me now the height of human ambition."

"And glory and honour?" asked Warrington, "are those nothing? and would you give up the winning of them?"

"They were my dreams once," answered the Colonel, who had now different ideas of happiness, "and now my desires are much more tranquil. I have followed arms ever since I was fourteen years of age. I have seen almost every kind of duty connected with my calling. I know all the garrison towns in this country, and have

had the honour to serve wherever there has been work to be done during the last ten years. I have done pretty nearly the whole of a soldier's duty, except, indeed, the command of an army, which can hardly be hoped for by one of my years; and now, methinks, I would like quiet, books to read, a wife to love me, and some children to dandle on my knee. I have imagined some such Elysium for myself, Mr. Warrington. True love is better than glory; and a tranquil fireside, with the woman of your heart seated by it, the greatest good the Gods can send to us."

Harry imagined to himself the picture which his comrade called up. He said "Yes" in answer to the other's remark; but, no doubt, did not give a very cheerful assent, for his companion observed upon the expression of his face.

"You say 'Yes' as if a fireside and a sweetheart were not particularly to your taste."

"Why, look you, Colonel; there are other things which a young fellow might like to enjoy. You have had sixteen years of the world: and I am but a few months away from my mother's apron-strings. When I have seen a campaign or two, or six, as you have: when I have distinguished myself like Mr. Wolfe, and made the world talk of me, I then may think of retiring from it."

To these remarks, Mr. Wolfe, whose heart was full of a very different matter, replied by breaking out in a farther encomium of the joys of marriage; and a special rhapsody upon the beauties and merits of his mistress—a theme intensely interesting to himself, though not so, possibly, to his hearer, whose views regarding a married life, if he permitted himself to entertain any, were somewhat melancholy and despondent. A pleasant afternoon brought them to the end of their ride; nor did any accident or incident accompany it, save, perhaps, a mistake which Harry Warrington made at some few miles distance from Tunbridge Wells, where two horsemen stopped them, whom Harry was for charging, pistol in hand, supposing them to be highwaymen. Colonel Wolfe, laughing, bade Mr. Warrington reserve his fire, for these folks were only innkeeper's agents, and not robbers (except in their calling). Gumbo, whose horse ran away with him at this particular juncture, was brought back after a great deal of bawling on his master's part, and the two gentlemen rode into the little town, alighted at their inn, and then separated each in quest of the ladies whom he had come to visit.

Mr. Warrington found his aunt installed in handsome lodgings, with a guard of London lacqueys in her ante-room, and to follow her chair when she went abroad. She received him with the utmost kindness. His cousin my Lady Maria was absent when he arrived: I don't know whether the young gentleman was unhappy at not seeing her: or whether he disguised his feelings, or whether Madame de Bernstein took any note regarding them.

A beau in a rich figured suit, the first specimen of the kind Harry

had seen, and two dowagers with voluminous hoops and plenty of rouge, were on a visit to the Baroness when her nephew made his bow to her. She introduced the young man to these personages as her nephew, the young Crœsus out of Virginia, of whom they had heard. She talked about the immensity of his estate, which was as large as Kent; and, as she had read, infinitely more fruitful. She mentioned how her half-sister, Madam Esmond, was called Princess Pocahontas in her own country. She never tired in her praises of mother and son, of their riches and their good qualities. The beau shook the young man by the hand, and was delighted to have the honour to make his acquaintance. The ladies praised him to his aunt so loudly that the modest youth was fain to blush at their compliments. They went away to inform the Tunbridge society of the news of his arrival. The little place was soon buzzing with accounts of the wealth, the good breeding, and the good looks of the Virginian.

"You could not have come at a better moment, my dear," the Baroness said to her nephew, as her visitors departed with many curtsies and congees. "Those three individuals have the most active tongues in the Wells. They will trumpet your good qualities in every company where they go. I have introduced you to a hundred people already, and, Heaven help me! have told all sorts of fibs, about the geography of Virginia in order to describe your estate. It *is* a prodigious large one, but I am afraid I have magnified it. I have filled it with all sorts of wonderful animals, gold mines, spices; I am not sure I have not said diamonds. As for your negroes, I have given your mother armies of them, and, in fact, represented her as a sovereign princess reigning over a magnificent dominion. So she *has* a magnificent dominion: I cannot tell to a few hundred thousand pounds how much her yearly income is, but I have no doubt it is a very great one. And you must prepare, sir, to be treated here as the heir-apparent of this royal lady. Do not let your head be turned! From this day forth you are going to be flattered as you have never been flattered in your life."

"And to what end, ma'am?" asked the young gentleman. "I see no reason why I should be reputed so rich, or get so much flattery."

"In the first place, sir, you must not contradict your old aunt, who has no desire to be made a fool of before her company. And as for your reputation, you must know we found it here almost ready-made on our arrival. A London newspaper has somehow heard of you, and come out with a story of the immense wealth of a young gentleman from Virginia lately landed, and a nephew of my Lord Castlewood. Immensely wealthy you are, and can't help yourself. All the world is eager to see you. You shall go to church to-morrow morning, and see how the whole congregation will turn away from its books and prayers, to worship the golden calf in your person. You would not have had me undeceive them, would you, and speak ill of my own flesh and blood?"

"But how am I bettered by this reputation for money?" asked Harry.

"You are making your entry into the world, and the gold key will open most of its doors to you. To be thought rich is as good as to be rich. You need not spend much money. People will say that you hoard it, and your reputation for avarice will do you good rather than harm. You'll see how the mothers will smile upon you, and the daughters will curtsey! Don't look surprised! When I was a young woman myself I did as all the rest of the world did, and tried to better myself by more than one desperate attempt at a good marriage. Your poor grandmother, who was a saint upon earth to be sure, bating a little jealousy, used to scold me, and called me worldly. Worldly, my dear! So is the world worldly; and we must serve it as it serves us; and give it nothing for nothing. Mr. Henry Esmond Warrington—I can't help loving the two first names, sir, old woman as I am, and that I tell you—on coming here or to London, would have been nobody. Our protection would have helped him but little. Our family has little credit, and *entre nous*, not much reputation. I suppose you know that Castlewood was more than suspected in '45, and hath since ruined himself by play?"

Harry had never heard about Lord Castlewood or his reputation.

"He never had much to lose, but he has lost that and more: his wretched estate is eaten up with mortgages. He has been at all sorts of schemes to raise money:—my dear, he has been so desperate at times, that I did not think my diamonds were safe with him; and have travelled to and from Castlewood without them. Terrible, isn't it, to speak so of one's own nephew? But you are my nephew too, and not spoiled by the world yet, and I wish to warn you of its wickedness. I heard of your play-doings with Will and the chaplain, but they could do you no harm,—nay, I am told you had the better of them. Had you played with Castlewood, you would have had no such luck: and you *would* have played, had not an old aunt of yours warned my Lord Castlewood to keep his hands off you."

"What, ma'am, did you interfere to preserve me?"

"I kept his clutches off from you: be thankful that you are come out of that ogre's den with any flesh on your bones! My dear, it has been the rage and passion of all our family. My poor silly brother played; both his wives played, especially the last one, who has little else to live upon now but her nightly assemblies in London, and the money for the cards. I would not trust her at Castlewood alone with you: the passion is too strong for them, and they would fall upon you, and fleece you; and then fall upon each other, and fight for the plunder. But for his place about the Court my poor nephew hath nothing, and that is Will's fortune too, sir, and Maria's and her sister's."

"And are they, too, fond of the cards?"

"No; to do poor Molly justice, gaming is not her passion: but

when she is amongst them in London, little Fanny will bet her eyes out of her head. I know what the passion is, sir: do not look so astonished; I have had it, as I had the measles when I was a child. I am not cured quite. For a poor old woman there is nothing left but that. You will see some high play at my card-tables to-night. Hush! my dear! It was that I wanted, and without which I moped so at Castlewood! I could not win of my nieces or their mother. They would not pay if they lost. 'Tis best to warn you, my dear, in time, lest you should be shocked by the discovery. I can't live without the cards, there's the truth!"

A few days before, and while staying with his Castlewood relatives, Harry, who loved cards, and cock-fighting, and betting, and every conceivable sport himself, would have laughed very likely at this confession. Amongst that family into whose society he had fallen, many things were laughed at, over which some folks looked grave. Faith and honour were laughed at; pure lives were disbelieved; selfishness was proclaimed as common practice; sacred duties were sneeringly spoken of, and vice flippantly condoned. These were no Pharisees: they professed no hypocrisy of virtue, they flung no stones at discovered sinners:—they smiled, shrugged their shoulders, and passed on. The members of this family did not pretend to be a whit better than their neighbours, whom they despised heartily; they lived quite familiarly with the folks, about whom and whose wives they told such wicked, funny stories; they took their share of what pleasure or plunder came to hand, and lived from day to day till their last day came for them. Of course there are no such people now; and human nature is very much changed in the last hundred years. At any rate, card-playing is greatly out of mode: about *that* there can be no doubt: and very likely there are not six ladies of fashion in London, who know the difference between Spadille and Manille.

"How dreadfully dull you must have found those hum-drum people at that village where we left you—but the savages were very kind to you, child!" said Madame de Bernstein, patting the young man's cheek with her pretty old hand.

"They were very kind; and it was not at all dull, ma'am, and I think they are some of the best people in the world," said Harry, with his face flushing up. His aunt's tone jarred upon him. He could not bear that any one should speak or think lightly of the new friends whom he had found. He did not want them in such company.

The old lady, imperious and prompt to anger, was about to resent the check she had received, but a second thought made her pause. "Those two girls," she thought, "a sick-bed—an interesting stranger—of course he has been falling in love with one of them." Madame Bernstein looked round with a mischievous glance at Lady Maria, who entered the room at this juncture.

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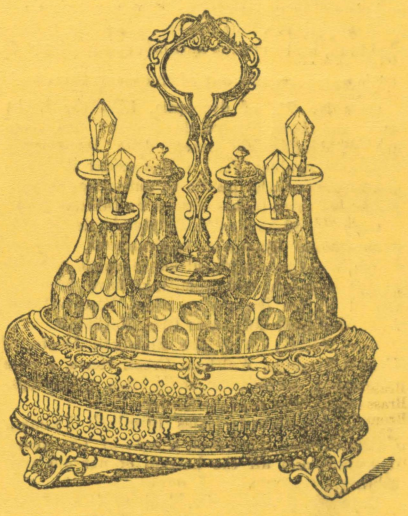

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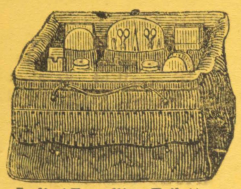

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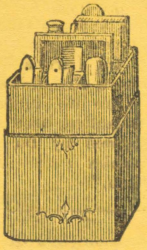

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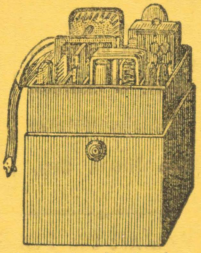

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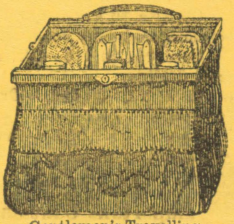

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